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Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Support Mission in Libya

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 2323 (2016) of 13 December 2016. It covers political and security developments in Libya, provides an overview of the human rights and humanitarian situation in the country and outlines the activities of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) since the issuance of my previous report of 1 December 2016 (S/2016/1011).

II. Political and security-related developments

2. Over a year after the signing of the Libyan Political Agreement, and following months of political stalemate, efforts continue to facilitate its effective implementation. The Presidency Council has worked to consolidate its authority despite internal divisions and a challenging security context. Positive steps were taken, including the establishment of a budget framework for 2017 as part of efforts to operationalize funding streams to deliver services and ensure the functioning of public institutions. However, on 2 January 2017, Deputy Prime Minister Mousa al-Kony resigned, expressing discontent at the ineffectiveness of the Presidency Council.

3. The overall security situation deteriorated significantly during the reporting period, with escalating clashes in Tripoli, fighting in the oil crescent region and rising tensions in the Sabha area. Ongoing mediation efforts by the United Nations, in close cooperation with regional and international partners, are keeping the parties engaged and largely supportive of the political process, within the framework of the Libyan Political Agreement. Consensus is slowly emerging on the issues that need to be addressed to restore the political transition. Potential for further military escalation remains, however, due to the largely unaddressed structural political issues and the multiplicity of armed actors on the ground with conflicting agendas.

Implementation of the Libyan Political Agreement

4. UNSMIL continued to work with Libyan stakeholders to identify specific options for reviving the political process and launching talks on the contentious issues that are hampering the implementation of the Libyan Political Agreement. Parties across Libya expressed their continued commitment to the Agreement as the

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framework for the country's transition. However, there is broad consensus that certain defined elements of the Agreement must be amended to enable its implementation.

5. To move the process forward, and to identify the challenges to implementing the Libyan Political Agreement, a group of 40 Libyan representatives, comprising members of Parliament and the High State Council, former members of the Libyan National Transitional Council, former regime officials and tribal leaders, met in Cairo on 12 December 2016. In the concluding statement at that meeting, participants called for changes to the membership of the Libyan political dialogue, amendments to article 8 of the Additional Provisions of the Political Agreement and resolution of the issue of the command and structure of the Libyan armed forces. They also called for restructuring of the Presidency Council and amendment of its decision-making mechanisms, and for the enlargement of the High State Council to include all former members of the General National Congress.

6. On 5 January 2017, in an effort to explore options for a consensual amendment of the Libyan Political Agreement, my Special Representative met with the President of the House of Representatives, Agila Saleh, in Tunis. The President of the House of Representatives proposed a reconfiguration of the Libyan political dialogue on the basis of representation from the House of Representatives and the High State Council. My Special Representative also met with the President of the High State Council, Abderrahman Swehli, who expressed willingness to engage. My Special Representative met again with the President of the House of Representatives and the President of the High State Council on 19 and 20 February, respectively. They both agreed in principle to form a joint committee, including members of the House of Representatives and the High State Council, to work together to amend the agreement by consensus.

7. The Libyan political dialogue continued to play an important role as a consultative body bringing together representatives of diverse stakeholders and views. On 24 January 2017, an informal consultative session of members of the dialogue proposed options for resolving the key contentious issues hampering the implementation of the Libyan Political Agreement, including the composition and role of the Presidency Council and the supreme command of the Libyan National Army. The majority of the members of the Libyan political dialogue attended and endorsed the conclusions of the consultative session.

8. The House of Representatives remained divided, failing to reach the quorum necessary to vote on the proposed amendment to the Constitutional Declaration, by means of which institutions emanating from the Libyan Political Agreement would be incorporated into the constitutional framework and the provisions of the Constitutional Declaration would be amended. The House of Representatives was also unable to agree on the composition of the delegation that would be mandated to represent it in talks with other stakeholders.

9. Parallel institutions remained in place. The Bayda'-based "interim Government" continued to assert its authority in the east of the country, despite its lack of legal status under the Libyan Political Agreement. Similarly, the former, unrecognized, "Government of National Salvation" continued with its efforts to reassert control in various parts of Tripoli and symbolically seized a number of unoccupied government buildings.

Regional and international engagement

10. Neighbouring States and regional organizations continued to exert efforts to support the advancement of the Libyan political process. On 21 January 2017, the tenth ministerial meeting of the neighbouring countries of Libya was held in Cairo.

Participants reiterated their commitment to preserving the legitimacy and unity of Libyan State institutions, including the Libyan National Army, and expressed support for the Presidency Council, calling for the formation of a government of national accord. They also undertook to foster regional cooperation in the area of counter-terrorism and border security, and to continue to coordinate their initiatives in the context of the United Nations-facilitated political process.

11. On 21 January 2017, to improve coordination among regional organizations, my Special Representative participated in the second formal meeting of the "troika" comprising the African Union, the League of Arab States and the United Nations, which was held in Cairo, and hosted by the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States. The three institutions agreed to continue to coordinate closely and to extend membership of the group to the European Union.

12. The African Union High-level Committee on Libya met for the second time on 27 January 2017, in Brazzaville. Participating Heads of State expressed support for the institutions emanating from the Libyan Political Agreement. In its final communiqué, the Committee also called for an inclusive political process to overcome existing blockages and extended its membership to include all of the neighbouring States of Libya.

13. On 19 and 20 January 2017, to foster greater cooperation and coordination of regional initiatives, Tunisia convened a ministerial-level meeting between Algeria, Egypt and Tunisia, Libya's northern neighbours, in Tunis. At the meeting the ministers reiterated their support for an inclusive political process facilitated by the United Nations, based on respect for the sovereignty and unity of Libya.

Situation in the western region

14. The security situation in Tripoli remained volatile. The capital continued to be under the control of multiple armed groups, some of them aligned with the Presidency Council and others opposed to it. Several of these groups sought to expand their influence, provoking increased clashes in contested areas throughout Tripoli and in its environs.

15. In early December 2016, armed groups clashed in downtown Tripoli with militants loyal to the former Government of National Salvation, leaving 20 people dead and many more injured, including civilians. To the west of the capital, armed groups from Janzur and the neighbouring Warshafanah area clashed in early February 2017. At least four people died. In the east of Tripoli, eight people were killed in clashes between groups from the towns of Qasr al-Qarahbulli and Tarhunah. On 21 January, an aborted car bombing near the Italian embassy in Tripoli resulted in the death of two of the perpetrators. Furthermore, ordinary crime and lawlessness spread, with kidnappings and robberies severely affecting citizens' freedom of movement. Further clashes took place in southern Tripoli in mid- and late February between groups from the Abu Salim area and Misratah, leaving at least 17 people dead.

16. The former Government of National Salvation, together with remnants of the former General National Congress, continued efforts to re-establish their power base in Tripoli. On 12 January 2017, armed groups loyal to them took over a number of ministerial facilities in southern Tripoli, including the Ministry of Defence. On 15 February, armed groups opposed to the Presidency Council and military officers from various cities in western Libya, including Misratah, Zawiyah, Gharyan and Tripoli, announced the formation of a national guard and held military parades throughout the area. Moreover, on 21 February, the convoy of President Faiez Serraj was ambushed by forces loyal to the General National Congress in the vicinity of its former headquarters, resulting in a firefight.

Situation in the eastern region

17. Previously, the Libyan National Army had replaced the elected mayors in a number of eastern municipalities with military officers. On 16 February 2017, the Libyan National Army issued a decision prohibiting women under 60 years of age from travelling abroad without a male "guardian", citing security concerns. Throughout the country, Libyan women activists protested and described the decision as a breach of the country's human rights obligations, as well as of the Constitutional Declaration. The decision was put on hold on 21 February as a result of those protests and was subsequently replaced by a decision requiring all Libyans between 18 and 45 years of age to acquire security approval before travelling abroad.

18. Fighting continued in various locations in the eastern region, in particular in the city of Benghazi. In early January 2017, a large group of fighters of Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) broke out of their enclaves in the Qanfudah and Sabri areas and escaped towards the south. Many were subsequently killed by the Libyan National Army in the Ajdabiya area. In late January, the Libyan National Army gained control over most of the Qanfudah area, formerly held by the Benghazi Revolutionaries Shura Council and its allies. More than 30 the Libyan National Army troops were reportedly killed and 25 were reported wounded in the clashes, including in repeated airstrikes by the Libyan National Army on positions of the Benghazi Revolutionaries Shura Council. More than 60 captives were reportedly freed from Qanfudah, as well as 30 families and 46 foreign workers. Subsequent fighting centred on the last stronghold of the Benghazi Revolutionaries Shura Council in the area, where a number of civilians were still present. UNSMIL continued to support local mediators in their efforts to facilitate the evacuation of civilians from the district of Qanfudah. Fighting continued in the central Sabri and Suq al-Hut neighbourhoods.

19. In central Benghazi, one person was killed and five others injured on 20 January 2017 when a car bomb exploded, injuring a former interior minister. On 25 January, a car bomb rocked the centre of Benghazi, leaving at least six people wounded, including five civilians and a soldier. On 22 February, a car bomb targeted the head of police in Benghazi, causing injuries; and on 25 February, a similar attack targeted a senior commander of the Libyan National Army, resulting in three reported fatalities and several wounded.

Situation in the southern region

20. In Sabha, the situation remained fragile, characterized by a continued build-up of rival military forces, including the Misratan Third Force, Battalion 12 of the Libyan National Army and armed groups affiliated with the Awlad Sulayman, Qadhadhfa and Tebu tribes, which are competing for the control of strategic infrastructure amid ongoing tribal tensions. On 24 December 2016, clashes between the Awlad Sulayman and Qadhadhfa tribes reportedly caused 10 fatalities, notwithstanding a peace deal signed earlier between the two communities. In Kufrah, on 1 February 2017, tensions rose in the border area with the Sudan, following a clash between armed groups of the Tebu and Zwaya tribes that left five people dead and three injured. On 5 February, relations between the Hasawnah and Zintan communities became strained after a shooting incident that resulted in three fatalities.

21. On 23 December 2016, two Libyan individuals hijacked a Libyan passenger aircraft at Sabha's Tamanhint airport, forcing the pilot to divert to Malta. The incident resulted in the closure of the airport, hitherto used for civilian flights to the area. During the reporting period, frequent skirmishes occurred in the surroundings

of Birak al-Shati' airbase and Tamanhint airport between Libyan National Army Battalion 12 forces of the Maqarihah tribe and the rival Misratan Third Force, which controls the two airbases

22. In protest at the lack of security and basic services in the southern region, on 15 January 2017, members of the House of Representatives from the area issued a statement suspending their membership. On 20 February, they resumed their membership.

ISIL and the liberation of Sirte

23. After a seven-month Libyan-led counter-terrorism campaign, forces allied to the Presidency Council, participating in Operation Bunyan Marsus (Solid Wall), took control of the last ISIL stronghold in Sirte on 6 December 2016. By liberating Sirte, the Operation forces, supported by United States airstrikes, ended ISIL control and administration of the territory, which it had established in 2014. The forces sustained at least 715 fatalities during the campaign, with more than 4,000 troops injured. The number of ISIL losses was estimated at around 2,500 fighters.

24. Remnants of ISIL were still active in the hinterland of Sirte. ISIL elements continued to conduct asymmetric attacks against Operation Bunyan Marsus forces, mainly with improvised explosive devices and ambushes along the roads west of Sirte and in desert valleys to the south-west of the city, where they found safe havens. There were more than 25 attacks from September 2016 to January 2017. On 19 January 2017, a United States airstrike killed an estimated 90 ISIL fighters in the desert south-west of Sirte. Most ISIL fighters who had left Sirte during the months of fighting withdrew to the desert and mountainous areas south of Bani Walid, where they maintain a presence. Some smaller cells also moved southward to the area of Sabha and Awbari or westward towards the areas of Khums and Tarhunah. Moreover, it is reported that there are still ISIL sleeper cells in the western coastal areas and the greater Tripoli area.

25. Operation Bunyan Marsus forces, largely composed of fighters from Misratah, remained deployed in Sirte and the Jufrah region in central Libya. Other battalions returned to their home towns, including Misratah, or to Tripoli, reinforcing the armed groups already present south of the capital. Local authorities began some rehabilitation work in Sirte as internally displaced people started to return to parts of the city. Other neighbourhoods of the city remained contaminated by improvised explosive devices and explosive remnants of war. A post-conflict stabilization plan for Sirte was developed under the supervision of the Presidency Council but remains in need of resources. On 11 February 2017, the Mayor of Sirte was abducted by unknown perpetrators in the vicinity of Tripoli. He is yet to be accounted for.

26. Between 3 and 13 March 2017, the Benghazi Defence Brigades, a coalition of Islamist armed groups, temporarily seized control of the Sidrah and Ra's Lanuf oil ports and nearby towns in the oil crescent area from the Libyan National Army, following unsuccessful previous attacks. On 14 March, after heavy airstrikes, Libyan National Army forces retook control of the area from the Benghazi Defence Brigades and pushed the group back towards Jufrah. More than 40 people, including some civilians, were reportedly killed in the fighting. The Libyan National Army carried out a series of airstrikes on Benghazi Defence Brigades forces in the Jufrah area between December 2016 and March 2017.

Economic situation

27. On 6 January 2017, as part of efforts to activate the budget and address the most pressing economic challenges, the Prime Minister, Faiez Serraj, signed the 2017 budget framework, following a series of Libyan economic dialogue meetings

that brought representatives of the Presidency Council and the country's main economic and financial institutions, together with a limited number of Member States. The Presidency Council continued to exert efforts to operationalize funding streams for line ministries from the Central Bank. During the reporting period, the Presidency Council and the Central Bank completed the disbursement of the remaining 2016 expenditures and agreed on the budgetary process.

28. The Central Bank introduced a number of measures to tackle the liquidity crisis, including the circulation of newly printed banknotes and the allocation of $400 per year for purchase by each Libyan citizen at the official exchange rate. Meanwhile, the Presidency Council and the Central Bank are in disagreement over how to address the devaluation of the dinar. As of 7 March 2017, the black market exchange rate was 6.36 dinars per United States dollar, compared with an official exchange rate of 1.42 dinars per United States dollar.

29. The improvement of economic indicators such as the growth of the gross domestic product (GDP) and government revenues since August 2016 can be attributed to a significant increase in oil production. In mid-January 2017, Libyan oil output exceeded 720,000 barrels per day, compared with 200,000 barrels per day in August 2016. With the aim of increasing oil production to over 1.2 million barrels per day by the end of 2017, the chairman of the National Oil Corporation, Mustafa Sanalla, continued to engage with a number of international oil corporations to explore options for attracting foreign direct investment into the oil sector.

III. Constitution drafting process

30. International efforts to support the process of drafting the constitution continued. During the reporting period, the administrative court in Bayda' ruled against the changes to the by-laws of the Constitution Drafting Assembly, which had allowed a vote to be taken on the draft constitution with a reduced quorum. On the basis of that vote, 37 of the 58 elected members of the Assembly had agreed on a draft to be put to a referendum. The decision of the administrative court is being appealed before the Supreme Court in Tripoli. A new member was appointed to replace the former chairman of the Constitution Drafting Assembly, Ali Tarhouni, who was ruled ineligible to serve by another decision of the administrative court. A new chairman, Nuh Abdel Sayed Al-Maghrabi, was elected on 3 January 2017.

31. The inability to make progress towards final agreement on the text of the constitution to be put to a referendum is linked to the stalemate in the political process. Frustration with continued political divisions has also affected the Assembly. On 24 January 2017, members of the Libyan political dialogue issued a statement calling for the suspension of the Assembly within a month, should that body fail to commit to the completion of a draft constitution. Members of the dialogue cited article 52 of the Libyan Political Agreement, according to which the work of the Assembly was to continue no longer than 24 March 2016. Members of the Assembly condemned the statement and cautioned against the replacement of a democratically elected body.

IV. Other activities of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya

A. Electoral support

32. The United Nations electoral support team maintained its readiness to provide advisory support and technical assistance to the High National Elections

Commission. Following the closure of its Libyan Electoral Assistance Project in December 2016, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) commissioned an evaluation to provide recommendations regarding its future involvement within a reviewed and integrated United Nations electoral assistance framework for continuous support to the High National Elections Commission and Libyan electoral stakeholders, in support of credible electoral processes.

33. The headquarters of the High National Elections Commission and its 17 district electoral offices remained operational across the country during the reporting period, although a lack of funding may have a negative impact on the Commission's capacity in the long term. Furthermore, a lack of clarity on the political and electoral framework, and the volatile security situation in Libya, will continue to pose major challenges for the conduct of any electoral events, including the upcoming presidential and parliamentary elections tentatively scheduled for early 2018.

B. Human rights, transitional justice and the rule of law

34. Violations of international human rights and humanitarian law continued to be perpetrated by all parties to the conflict. In addition, ordinary crime was endemic, mainly owing to the state of general lawlessness and the weakness of judicial institutions.

35. The ongoing conflict across the country continued to claim civilian casualties. From 1 December 2016 to 17 February 2017, UNSMIL documented a total of 48 civilian casualties, including 24 deaths and 24 injuries. Leading causes of death included direct gunfire, airstrikes, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices. Two explosions from improvised explosive devices targeted the Benghazi Medical Centre on 1 and 21 December, causing five injuries, as well as material damage.

36. On 27 January 2017, residents of Qanfudah, including families, migrants and prisoners from the former Abu Hudaymah military prison, were taken into the custody of the Libyan National Army in a number of detention facilities. In some cases, civilians were denied family visits and did not receive legal assistance. Dozens of others remain trapped in a small area of Qanfudah where they are still facing severe shortages of food and water and a lack of medical care. UNSMIL continued to investigate allegations of extrajudicial executions following the takeover of Qanfudah by the Libyan National Army.

Abductions and killings

37. Armed groups from all sides continued to abduct, torture and kill civilians. Individuals were targeted for their political opinions, affiliations, family or tribal identity, and also for ransom or prisoner exchange. On 19 December 2016, in Darnah, four men affiliated to the Darnah Mujahidin Shura Council abducted an individual from the street and detained him for six days and severely beat him. On 10 February 2017, armed men reportedly affiliated with the Libyan National Army raided the home of a former military commander in Ajdabiya and abducted his son, holding him at an unofficial detention facility in Benghazi for two days before they released him.

38. On 8 December 2016, the bodies of two men with gunshot wounds were found near the Barakah Correction and Rehabilitation Institution (known as Ruwaymi prison) in Tripoli. The men had reportedly been detained at the facility prior to their deaths. According to the head of the judicial police, the case has been referred to the Office of the General Prosecutor after an internal investigation. No investigations

were reported to have taken place into previous reports of extrajudicial executions by armed groups, including the alleged shooting upon capture of eight members of the Petroleum National Guard in Sidrah by an armed group aligned with the Libyan National Army, on 18 September 2016.

39. During the reporting period, UNSMIL continued to receive information on kidnappings in Bayda', Darnah and Shahhat. On 1 February 2017, in Bayda', an armed group abducted the Director of the Darnah Civil Registration Office. On the same day, in Darnah, two elders were taken by the Darnah Mujahidin Shura Council and subsequently released. On 3 February, a former member of the General National Congress and a lecturer at Omar al-Mukhtar University were abducted from the street in Shahhat. Their whereabouts and the reason behind their abduction remain unclear. House of Representatives member Jibril Awhaidah from Kufrah was also kidnapped outside his home in Tubruq on 31 January. He was subsequently released unharmed on 18 February.

Detention, torture and deaths in custody

40. Arbitrary detention continued to be widespread in both official prisons and detention facilities run by armed groups across the country. Little progress was made in reviewing individual cases to ensure that those being held are either referred to trial or released, in accordance with Libyan law.

41. UNSMIL visited a number of facilities, including the Barakah, Tubruq, Jawwiyah and Taminah prisons under the purview of the Ministry of Justice. UNSMIL registered concerns relating to overcrowded and unhygienic conditions, and severe delays in referring detainees to the judicial authorities. Previous allegations of torture, ill-treatment and deaths in custody as a result of torture were not reported to have resulted in prosecutions.

Groups in vulnerable situations

Migrants

42. Migrants were rounded up and detained arbitrarily in detention centres run by the Libyan Department for Combating Illegal Migration or under the control of armed groups and criminal trafficking networks. Migrants were not afforded the opportunity to challenge the legality of their detention and were held with insufficient food, clean water and access to sanitation facilities, leading to serious illness and sometimes death. On 13 December 2016, UNSMIL and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), issued a joint report on human rights abuses against migrants in Libya. It was reported that migrants are subjected to torture, forced labour and sexual exploitation at the hands of smugglers, traffickers, members of armed groups and security forces, including the Libyan coastguard.

Women and children

43. Children were victims of abductions, arbitrary detention, torture and other ill-treatment, and were often held in detention together with adults. Civilian casualties included children, with at least five killed and four injured in hostilities during the reporting period.

44. Women were arbitrarily held in detention, often because of family affiliations. Women and girls, including foreign nationals, were held captive in Sirte by groups allied to ISIL. They were subjected to torture, rape and other forms of sexual violence. By the end of February 2017, at least 117 women were being held in overcrowded prisons in Misratah under investigation for alleged involvement in

terrorism-related activities. The majority had reportedly been cleared by the prosecution in January.

45. At a workshop on human rights monitoring, including of sexual and gender-based violence, facilitated by UNSMIL on 5 December 2016, participants highlighted the rise in sexual violence against women and lamented the general climate of insecurity and the breakdown of the rule of law.

Transitional justice and national reconciliation

46. UNSMIL and UNDP continued to support the Misratah/Tawurgha' dialogue committee. However, the agreement on reparations and the return of displaced persons that was finalized by the committee on 31 August 2016 has not yet been signed by the Misratah Municipal Council or the Presidency Council. In December 2016 and January 2017, UNSMIL facilitated a number of meetings of the committee on reparations and the right of return for internally displaced persons to discuss the modalities for a non-technical assessment of the levels of contamination by landmines and other explosive remnants of war in Tawurgha'.

47. On 21 February 2017, UNSMIL and OHCHR issued a joint report on the trial of Saif al-Islam Qadhafi and 36 other leading members of the regime of Colonel Muammar Qadhafi (Case 630/2012). The report found that while the trial represented the most extensive effort by the Libyan authorities to hold to account those responsible for human rights violations and war crimes during the 2011 uprising and armed conflict, it fell short of international standards for a fair trial.

48. A national reconciliation process remains long overdue in Libya. Nonetheless, women and youth, along with tribal councils, elders, civil society organizations and municipalities, were engaged in reconciliation at the local and community levels. Recent coordinated bottom-up efforts by those actors had helped to settle local conflicts, including in Sabha and in Tripoli.

49. During the reporting period, UNSMIL continued its work on fostering reconciliation, including through a programme to assist and strengthen community reconciliation processes, with the support of the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund and UNDP. From 19 to 21 January 2017, UNSMIL held a workshop in Malta, with Libyan experts and activists representing a wide variety of constituencies, to establish a clear road map for national reconciliation in Libya.

Judicial and penal system

50. Prosecutors, judges and other judicial staff continued to work in a difficult security environment, in which they were subjected to intimidation and threats. On 1 February 2017, a group of armed men broke into the Zawiyah court complex in an apparent attempt to abduct a public prosecutor. In protest at the failure of the authorities to secure the court premises and provide protection for judicial staff, a number of prosecutors suspended their work. The Tripoli court complex suspended its activities for several days in late December 2016, following the storming of its premises by armed men on 26 December and the killing of two members of the Criminal Investigation Department.

51. UNSMIL continued to support the building of national judicial institutions. On 7 and 8 December 2016, UNSMIL facilitated a seminar attended by senior judicial police officers, prosecutors, judges and civil society representatives to strengthen cooperation between the prison administration and the judiciary.

52. During the reporting period, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) initiated a legislative review process in the context of its project entitled "Support to the process of criminal justice reform in Libya". The first phase of the

review focused on the Criminal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure and the Police Act.

53. In addition, in January and February 2017, UNODC, as part of its enhanced focus on the smuggling of migrants in Libya, organized three days of training in Tunis for relevant departments of the Ministry of the Interior, the Libyan coastguard and the Attorney-General's Office on the investigation of cases of migrant smuggling and the provision of adequate protection and assistance to smuggled migrants.

C. Security sector

Support for Libyan planning for interim security arrangements

54. Libyan armed and security forces remained fragmented. The Libyan army was divided between Libyan National Army forces based in the east and army units in the west under the control of the Presidency Council. The Presidency Council has yet to assume effective control over the Tripoli security apparatus, which continued to be riven by divisions. In effect, Tripoli was under the control of several armed groups only nominally operating under the Ministry of the Interior. Police forces, although present throughout the country and retaining a modicum of cohesion, continued to be weak and in need of capacity-building support.

55. UNSMIL worked closely with the Presidency Council and the Ministries of the Interior and Defence on the implementation of the interim security arrangements outlined in the Libyan Political Agreement. Key areas of support included assessments and planning for security in Tripoli; assistance for the formation of the Presidential Guard; engagement with armed groups in the capital; and activities for countering improvised explosive devices and clearing explosive remnants of war.

56. UNSMIL continued to advise the Presidential Guard, led by General Najmi Nakua, on force generation and capacity-building issues related to the establishment of the Guard. The Presidential Guard was tasked with protecting, inter alia, the Presidency Council and the Government of National Accord, as well as foreign dignitaries in Tripoli. Recruitment into the force started in late 2016. Some 180 personnel were deployed during the reporting period. UNSMIL also engaged with the Ministry of Defence in connection with the development of an assistance task force for securing Tripoli, based on regular army units in the capital.

57. The work of UNSMIL to strengthen the country's security institutions also included the provision of technical assistance to the Ministry of the Interior, addressing organizational gaps and ensuring a more extensive deployment of police units in and around Tripoli. The Mission's work was supported by the European Union Liaison and Planning Cell, which provided planning assistance across the board. Moreover, UNSMIL assisted the European Union military operation in the Southern Central Mediterranean in training the Libyan coastguard through the provision of advice on vetting and education in human rights and gender sensitization. Some 90 members of the Libyan coastguard completed a first package of training in February 2017.

Arms and ammunition management

58. There continued to be a significant risk of death and injury from explosive remnants of war and booby traps across Libya. Internally displaced persons returning to Sirte and humanitarian actors working in the area remain at an especially high risk of death and injury. The United Nations Mine Action Service facilitated meetings in December 2016 and February 2017 between the national

authorities, the international community and mine action partners to develop a plan for preventing and addressing this hazard, including through communication with the population. It also facilitated training and equipment for emergency trauma medical techniques for 12 clearance personnel working for the authorities in Sirte. With funding from the Central Emergency Response Fund, the United Nations Mine Action Service also provided training and equipment allowing non-technical survey teams to carry out explosive hazards risk assessments at 18 locations in Benghazi.

D. Women's empowerment

59. UNSMIL, in close coordination with the United Nations country team, continued to promote the role of women in the political process, in accordance with the implementation of Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 2122 (2013). UNSMIL promoted and supported women's political participation through dedicated capacity-building initiatives, with the objective of reaching a target of 30 per cent representation by 2018. On 14 December 2016, UNSMIL met with women members of the House of Representatives in Tubruq to develop an action plan based on the recommendations emanating from the conference of women parliamentarians convened in November 2016 (S/2016/1011, para. 53). As a result, a women's caucus was established.

60. From 23 to 26 January 2017, UNSMIL, with the support of UNDP, organized a follow-up conference in Tunis on the Libyan women's agenda for peace. The conference was attended by over 60 women, who agreed to develop a framework for a national campaign on peaceful coexistence at the community and national levels, for which UNSMIL will provide technical support. Seven women from different regions in Libya were nominated at the conference as focal points for the outreach campaign.

61. On 31 January 2017, UNSMIL in partnership with Operation Sophia of the European Union military operation in the Southern Central Mediterranean, provided gender sensitization training for nearly 100 Libyan coastguards in order to improve their skills in dealing with women and children migrants. The training also promoted the recruitment of women coastguards. As part of the Mission's longer-term engagement with the Libyan coastguard, in partnership with the military operation, a workshop was held in Malta on 7 March to begin the development of a training manual.

E. Youth

62. UNSMIL continued to widen its engagement with youth representatives and to promote their activities on its social media accounts. On 4 February 2017, my Special Representative held a meeting with civil society organizations and university students in Tripoli, during which participants expressed their concerns and their vision for the future of Libya. In the context of a perception survey conducted by UNSMIL in January, Libyan youth emerged as the group most supportive of the Libyan Political Agreement. The survey showed that more than 50 per cent of Libyan youth have either no access or insufficient access to basic services, including health care, medicine and electricity, as well as to cash-liquidity.

63. In close collaboration with Libyan authorities, and in support of the development of a national strategy for youth, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization are preparing a Libyan youth policy paper on "Youth: challenges and opportunities", on the basis of broad consultations with Libyan youth in seven municipalities.

64. In partnership with the European Union, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) launched a three-year multisectoral adolescent and youth development programme in four target municipalities (Bayda', Sabha, Zintan and Zuwarah). To replicate and scale up youth development activities nationwide, UNICEF signed a cooperation framework with the Ministry of Local Government on 13 January 2017. As a result, an interministerial committee was established in Tripoli to coordinate youth-focused activities among various government ministries and agencies. In February, UNICEF also organized a seven-day training workshop on participatory research for selected Libyan youth leaders in Tunis.

F. Coordination of international assistance

65. UNSMIL continued its efforts to coordinate international assistance. Two meetings of the joint Technical Coordination Committee were convened under the co-chairmanship of the Libyan Minister of Planning and my Deputy Special Representative, with the participation of the international community, as part of the coordination framework for international technical cooperation with the Government of National Accord. In addition, the basic services working group, led by the Ministry of Planning, and the economic recovery working group, co-chaired by the Ministry of Planning and the World Bank, were convened to align international assistance with Libyan priorities.

66. On 14 December 2016, UNSMIL and the United Nations country team in Libya gathered with national officials and representatives of civil society to discuss the future engagement of the United Nations in Libya. The outcome document proposed shared objectives of the United Nations system in Libya, including areas of support to government institutions.

G. Humanitarian, stabilization and development assistance

67. In total, 1.3 million people in Libya are in need of humanitarian assistance, with emergency health care, civilian protection and access to such basic services as medicine, water and food identified as clear priority needs, according to the Humanitarian Response Plan for 2017, published on 15 December 2016.

68. The health-care system in Libya is on the brink of collapse as a result of the conflict. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), as of February 2017 there were more than 303,000 internally displaced persons in Libya. According to the World Food Programme (WFP), about 17 per cent of internally displaced persons, an 11 per cent increase since 2015, are food insecure and 60 per cent are vulnerable to food insecurity.

69. Insufficient funding is hampering efforts to provide a meaningful and sustained response to humanitarian needs in Libya. Despite a relatively modest financial requirement of $151 million to assist 0.9 million people, only $9 million (6 per cent) has been received to date for the Humanitarian Response Plan.

70. Despite challenges and funding shortfalls, United Nations agencies, funds and programmes continued to provide urgent humanitarian relief and assistance, mainly through national counterparts. Since December 2016, more than 4,400 displaced families have been assisted with core relief items and cash assistance by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 75,800 internally displaced persons have benefited from on-site food distribution by WFP and 1,200 household farms have received improved seeds distributed by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

71. Over 17 per cent of Libyan hospitals remained closed during the period and all facilities reported severe shortages of material and equipment. In response, the World Health Organization, in partnership with the International Medical Corps and UNDP, have provided support to public hospitals through the distribution of interagency emergency health kits in Tripoli, Awbari and Jabal al-Gharbi; the funding of mobile medical units in Benghazi, Misratah, Sabha and Tripoli; and the installation of solar panels in nine hospitals in Tripoli, Benghazi and Sabha. UNICEF and its partners have provided educational and recreational support in safe learning spaces to school-age children in conflict-affected cities and hard to reach areas. By January 2017, some 9,500 children had completed their three-month cycle catch-up classes in Benghazi by January. In Sirte, UNICEF reported that over 10,400 returnee children are in urgent need of education, protection and psychosocial support.

72. About 1.3 million children were vaccinated from 10 to 17 December 2016. UNICEF also facilitated access to safe water supplies in Mizdah and to sanitation facilities in the municipalities of Tawurgha', Janzur and Suq al-Khamis, reaching more than 42,000 individuals. Hygiene kits were distributed to some 23,000 individuals in Benghazi, returnees in Sirte and women and unaccompanied children displaced to Misratah.

73. As of 3 March 2017, IOM had recorded some 13,500 refugees and migrants who had reached Italy by way of the Central Mediterranean route. The Libyan coastguard and other entities rescued more than 2,800 migrants between 1 December 2016 and 3 March 2017, and more than 140 deaths were reported. Of the 245,000 migrants identified by IOM, more than 6,600 were held in detention centres managed by the Department for Combating Illegal Migration. IOM estimates, however, that between 700,000 and 1 million refugees and migrants are present in the country. UNHCR and its partners continued to provide emergency assistance to survivors of rescue at sea, as well as to build the capacity of Libyan officials from the navy and the coastguard through training and the provision of equipment. Since 1 December 2016, UNHCR registered more than 40,000 refugees and asylum seekers, most of whom were Syrians and Palestinians.

74. Since December 2016, IOM has facilitated the voluntary return of more than 710 migrants to 13 countries of origin. Emergency assistance was provided by IOM and UNHCR to detained migrants, including in the Fallah, Gharyan and Tariq al-Sikkah facilities. Both agencies are pursuing efforts to transfer those migrants to better equipped facilities and advocate for the release of refugees and asylum seekers.

75. The Stabilization Facility for Libya project, launched by UNDP in April 2016 with funding from Member States in partnership with the Presidency Council and the Minister of Planning, is supporting cities affected and damaged by conflict. With a budget of $34 million, the Facility is reaching approximately 1.5 million people. It is currently operational in Kiklah, Awbari and Benghazi and is also expanding its outreach to Sirte and Sabha in the south in order to pre-position equipment, such as ambulances, garbage trucks and generators, and recruit teams of coordinators and engineers to be deployed for planning the rehabilitation of hospitals, health centres, schools and water systems.

76. A comprehensive assessment of core government and State functions in support of the Presidency Council and the Government of National Accord was completed in March 2017 by UNDP, in collaboration with UNSMIL. The assessment covered government employees, civil service reform, security and policing, justice and law enforcement and local governance.

V. Deployment of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya and security arrangements

77. In view of the security conditions in Libya, a total of 140 UNSMIL international staff remained deployed in Tunis, with an additional 30 national staff in Libya, as of 28 February 2017. Furthermore, three international staff members and one General Service staff member were deployed at United Nations headquarters, and three national staff at the Global Service Centre in Brindisi, Italy.

78. As set out in Security Council resolutions 2238 (2015), 2273 (2016), 2291 (2016) and 2323 (2016), UNSMIL continued to work towards the phased re-establishment of a permanent presence in Libya, as security and political conditions allow. UNSMIL staff continued to visit Libya on a regular basis to maintain access to key partners and political and security interlocutors across the country. Regular United Nations flights to Libya, and the availability of United Nations vehicles in the country, continued to facilitate the implementation of core mandate areas, enabling visits to detention centres, meetings with judicial authorities and engagement by the country team to enhance the provision of humanitarian, stabilization and development assistance.

79. UNSMIL has identified a location for a compound in Tripoli and, in December 2016, it entered into a contractual agreement to secure the premises. Construction work is currently under way to implement the required security and logistical enhancements. The United Nations Guard Unit to protect staff and premises is ready to be deployed when conditions allow. Alongside security personnel, a small team of support staff is serving on a rotational basis in Tripoli to oversee the works and ensure their completion in line with identified needs and standards.

80. As part of my continued commitment to engagement on the situation in Libya, in February 2017 I initiated a system-wide strategic assessment review, which will: (a) examine the role of the United Nations in Libya; and (b) shape priority-setting and the operational posture of UNSMIL and the United Nations country team across all activities in both the immediate and the longer term. The assessment process will contribute to my overall vision for Libya.

Security and safety of staff members and operations

81. United Nations personnel in Libya continued to work in a high-risk security environment to implement programmes and activities. The United Nations is still exposed to a wide range of threats, giving rise to a continued requirement for additional security resources in its programmes. During the reporting period, UNSMIL endeavoured to increase operations inside Libya and to maintain a permanent presence of security and other support staff in Tripoli on a rotational basis. As a result of the security situation, restrictions were implemented on the movement of personnel in Tripoli and on international staff taking flights to Tripoli and other Libyan destinations. On 4 December 2016, a United Nations national staff member became the victim of an attempted kidnapping while on his way to work. Peaceful demonstrations against the United Nations, with low numbers of protesters, took place in the capital and in major eastern cities during the reporting period.

82. There is an ongoing threat of terrorist attacks against the international community throughout Libya. That threat was highlighted by the explosion of an improvised explosive device in the vicinity of the Italian and Egyptian embassies and the Ministry of Planning on 21 January 2017. While ISIL no longer controls territory in Libya, there were sightings of its operatives and a number of attacks in different areas were attributed to the group. The security situation in Tripoli is

fragile and there is a serious threat of armed conflict potentially affecting United Nations staff or operations.

VI. Observations

83. Given the volatility of the security situation in Tripoli and the fighting in the oil crescent and elsewhere, Libya is at risk of a return to widespread conflict. I am alarmed by the renewed military escalation and the ongoing political stalemate in the country, which puts further strain on the transition and on the institutions emanating from the Libyan Political Agreement. The Presidency Council and the Government of National Accord remain constrained in their ability to govern effectively and to provide much needed basic services and security to the population.

84. I remind all parties that there can be no military solution to the Libyan crisis. I urge all armed actors to exercise restraint and remind them of their obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law, in particular the duty to protect civilians and the natural resources and national infrastructure of Libya. I call on all security actors to move forward without delay with the implementation of the interim security arrangements set out in the Libyan Political Agreement. I underscore the need for swift progress on the creation of professional and effective Libyan armed and security forces operating under civilian control. In this regard, I welcome progress on the formation of the Presidential Guard.

85. I call on all political stakeholders to take the necessary steps for a peaceful settlement to the Libyan crisis. The Libyan Political Agreement continues to be supported by the majority of Libyan and international stakeholders as the only political framework to lead the country forward. I take note of the emerging consensus on the need to make limited amendments to the agreement. This represents an opportunity to overcome the current political stalemate and move the transition forward. It is now urgent that all stakeholders, in an inclusive process, address the key issues hampering the implementation of the Political Agreement, including the composition and structure of various institutions, in particular the executive authority and military command. The United Nations stands ready to support a mechanism acceptable to all Libyan stakeholders, which is empowered, representative and able to resolve these issues. In accordance with its good offices mandate, the United Nations will continue to facilitate consensus on the reunification of the country's security institutions, including the future of armed groups and the development of a professional military under civilian control.

86. I welcome the efforts made by the Presidency Council to deliver on its mandate, including through establishing and disbursing the budget. Positive cooperation among the Presidency Council, the Government of National Accord and the Central Bank of Libya is essential to enable the Government to deliver services to the people. As the economic and financial situation remains fragile, I urge the parties to redouble their efforts to engage constructively to address funding and liquidity shortages, as well as longer-term structural issues. I am concerned that the progress made in restoring oil production and exports is at risk of being undermined by the recent escalation of violence in the oil crescent.

87. Institutions must continue to function in accordance with their mandate to prevent further deterioration of the political and security situation. The Libyan transition cannot wait. In this regard, I call on all Libyan institutions to assume their responsibilities to move the transition forward, on the basis of the Libyan Political Agreement.

88. I encourage the Libyan people to redouble their efforts and commit to a nationwide, Libyan-led reconciliation process. Such a process is essential for reinforcing the political dialogue and complements local reconciliation. The United Nations will continue to engage with national actors, tribal leaders, representatives of youth groups, municipalities, women's groups and other local community groups in this important endeavour. I encourage the parties to make full use of the good offices of UNSMIL to advance local and national reconciliation in the months ahead.

89. I commend Libyan women for actively engaging in peacebuilding initiatives and I encourage all Libyans to continue to strive for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security and resolution 2250 (2015) on youth and peace and security. I look forward to the appointment of the chairperson of the Women's Support and Empowerment Unit and I call on the Presidency Council to ensure that women are adequately represented in the Government of National Accord. The United Nations stands ready to promote and facilitate wider engagement and participation of women from across the spectrum of Libyan society in the political process and public institutions.

90. I welcome the liberation of Sirte and Benghazi from ISIL, and commend the courage and determination of Libyan forces. I express my deep sympathies to the victims of terrorism and violent extremism and to the families of all those who lost their lives in that fight. The high toll of terrorism on the Libyan people and the continued presence of ISIL in Libya underscore the urgent need to establish unified executive and security structures across the country to enable this threat to be contained.

91. I am concerned by the removal of elected mayors in municipal councils in eastern Libya and their replacement by unelected officials. Democratically elected, effective government bodies remain a cornerstone of a political transition and are essential for ensuring accountability and the effective provision of services. I call for the restoration of elected civilian representatives and urge Libyan actors to preserve democratically elected bodies throughout the country.

92. I remain deeply alarmed by the human rights situation in the country and by the lack of progress in achieving accountability for serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law. I condemn the targeting of civilian facilities, especially hospitals and medical centres. Armed groups across the country that continue to commit such violations must be held accountable, whether through national or international mechanisms. I welcome the commitment of the International Criminal Court to expand investigations and to making Libya a priority in 2017.

93. Migrants and refugees in Libya continue to suffer horrific abuses and risk death while transiting the country and across the Mediterranean Sea. Libya, with the support of the international community, has a responsibility to ensure that such abuses stop. While I welcome ongoing international efforts, I call on the Libyan authorities to step up prevention, oversight and protection measures, where possible. I also call on destination countries beyond Libya to ensure that any training provided to Libyan institutions that engage with migrants be accompanied by comprehensive efforts to stop the arbitrary detention of migrants and to improve their treatment in detention. I also reiterate that there is a need for a comprehensive approach to address the root causes in the countries of origin that drive so many people to take this dangerous journey.

94. I am gravely concerned at the overall deterioration of the humanitarian situation. Hundreds of thousands of Libyans, including those who have been repeatedly displaced, continue to bear the brunt of armed confrontations in different

parts of the country. I call on the Libyan authorities to enable and facilitate the safe return of displaced populations to their homes. I also urge Member States to provide resources to the Humanitarian Response Plan for 2017, so that relief can be brought to those in critical need of protection and humanitarian assistance.

95. I welcome the international community's swift response to support the decontamination of Sirte. However, the widespread presence across Libya of explosive hazards, including improvised explosive devices, continues to threaten civilians and humanitarian actors in areas such as Benghazi and Tripoli, where there is limited national capacity to address those threats. I continue to urge Member States to support and fund activities in the most severely affected areas and to provide training and equipment to the Libyan actors.

96. UNSMIL continues to work on building its premises in Tripoli to enable its return. It is closely monitoring the political and security environment on the ground to assess whether the conditions are conducive to that end. A system-wide strategic assessment will continue in the months ahead to ensure priority alignment of the United Nations presence in Libya with the evolving security and political situation.

97. I would like to express my appreciation to the African Union, the European Union, the League of Arab States and Member States for their strong support for the work of the United Nations in Libya. I am particularly encouraged by the commitment and support of regional actors and organizations, including the neighbours of Libya, for the Libyan political process. That commitment was demonstrated at the meeting of the "quartet", comprising the African Union, the European Union, the League of Arab States and UNSMIL, held in Cairo on 18 March 2017. I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the staff of UNSMIL and the United Nations system for their dedication and hard work and for their efforts to support the transition in Libya. I also wish to express my gratitude to my Special Representative, Martin Kobler, for his efforts to support the Libyans in driving forward the political process and implementing the Libyan Political Agreement.